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No. CLIV.

THE MINOR DRAMA.

THE GREAT
TRAGIC REVIVAL.

A NEW AND UNDOUBTEDLY ORIGINAL

Contemporaneous Dramatic Absurdity,

IN ONE ACT AND SEVERAL TABLEAUX.

BY JOHN BROUGHAM, COMEDIAN.

WITH CAST OF CHARACTERS, STAGE BUSINESS, COSTUMES,
RELATIVE POSITIONS, &c., &c.

AS PERFORMED AT BURTON'S THEATRE.

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THE ACTING EDITION.

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A description of the Costume—Cast of the Characters—Entrances and Exits—
Relative Positions of the Performers on the Stage, and the whole of the
Stage Business.

AS PERFORMED AT BURTON'S THEATRE.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1853, by John Brougham, in the Clerk's Office of
the District Court of the United States for the Southern District of New York.

NEW YORK:
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IAGO IACHIMO JONES Mr. Walcot.
ROMEO STUBBS Mr. Barrett.
TOM BERNARDO Mr. Setchell.
BILL RUBALDI Mr. McRae.
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THE GREAT TRAGIC REVIVAL.

SCENE I.—*Breakfast Room in the House of Shylock Barown.*

BILL BERNARDO and TOM RUBALDI meeting—BILL with dish, R.

Bill. What ho! who passes there?

Tom. Hush! Behold! do you not know me?

Bill. Rubaldi, or my eye deceives me.

Tom. The same. Bernardo, say, is breakfast ready?

Bill. Why should'st thou deem me so neglectful? Of a surety it is. The viands of the best that Centre Market can provide. Steak of beef and feet of juicy pig; the succulent buckwheat and the appetizing corn; flapjacks of mouth-watering flavor; thin bacon frizzled; tenderest chickens of the early spring; eggs in all culinary phases; the Chinese herb and the Arabian berry; and all the rich concomitants that tempt the changeful palate of uncertain man. [*Crosses, L.*]

Tom. By Tantalus and his receding grapes, thou fill'st me with a mighty longing!

Bill. Alas, my friend! what boots it that I thus exert myself? My care is wasted, inasmuch as they for whom I toil and thus embrown my skin o'er subterranean fires, come not to partake while calorific principle pervades the bountiful repast? Say, in what temper did'st thou leave the partner friends?

Tom. [*Brings him forward.*] Beshrew me—but let this be secret as the fluctuation in to-morrow's stock—I do deceive myself, and hugely, if there be not some ill-feeling toward. I did note their looks as they did shave; no word of greeting sprang to either lip, as heretofore; the elder's hand did shake consumedly.

Bill. Betokening haply a carouse last night.

Tom. Not so; the usual oyster only, washed down by no more potent night-cap.

Bill. Of whiskey?

Tom. Hot!

Bill. Ha! guessed I not aright?

Tom. Be the cause what it may, unfriendly were their looks.

Bill. I can interpret well the reason. Mark my words: our gentle Jessica the old Samith affects.

Tom. You do surprise me.

Bill. Past all doubt.

Tom. Returns she not his passion?

Bill. Not a whit; her eye has lighted on a younger swain, with winsome features but with coffers light; a clerk he is and in our employ. I've watched intently as a faithful servitor should, every tittle of his lord's affairs; and many a sweet stolen interview have overseen and heard. But hark! a footstep! Be thy tongue silent and thy heart discreet.

[*Exeunt. Music.*]

Enter IAGO JONES and ROMEO STUBBS, C.

Jones. I tell thee, Stubbs, thou art a fool—upon my life, a fool—a most sandsighted and unthinking fool. This is the breakfast room of those same merchants. I know not at what moment they may enter, so we can converse with secrecy. Now list to me. Have I not proven myself your friend? did I, at any bar, howe'er expensive, ever smile, and thou not counted in? Who got thee tickets for the Crystal Palace Ball? Who led thy wandering footsteps to each place of mirth and revelry? Who taught thee every move upon the cards of life, from princely faro down to simple muggins? Have I not, therefore, earned the right to call thee friend?

Romeo. Thou hast, I own it, and I thank thee, Jones.

Jones. That cordial grasp assures me thou art honest. Now for this wayward girl, thy Jessica, she whom you think you love.

Romeo. Think! Now, by the high ambitious hopes that swell within my breast, that one day I may see my humble name with theirs conjoined—Barown, Samith & Co., the foremost dry goods firm in all the land, I do not think, friend Jones—I know I love her; else, why beats, like the ticking of a clock, my heart's machinery against my ribs?

Jones. Pshaw, man! it's but incipient indigestion. A skillfully prepared light brandy cocktail will effect an instant cure. Besides, she is not worthy of your love.

Romeo. Oh, say not that, or Bloomingdale's retreat will hold another inmate! She unworthy! then are contractors honest, city funds unplundered, demagogues unselfish, revivals real, crime extinct, policemen vigilant, and Paradise reopened on Manhatta's isle! Why do you tear my soul by such an accusation?

Jones. Enough, to say I know it. Her most luxurious and expensive tastes would drain the the coffers of a millionaire. What is your present income?

Romeo. Eight hundred dollars a year.

Jones. It wouldn't buy her gloves.

Romeo. Oh, yes! A plain and frugal home, haloed by love's ecstatic radiance, would be to us an everlasting summer; love, satisfying love would be our ever-varying and perpetual banquet, with whose ambrosial food our happy home would be so amply stored, it would be but sacrilege to hunger after grosser sustenance.

[*Crosses, R.*]

Jones. That won't last long. In time you'll find a thick beef steak a pleasant change.

Romeo. Away with such a thought! Oh! I could live upon the memory of love alone!

Jones. That's because you've had your breakfast ; you'll change opinions before dinner time. However, you have the right to do as you please—you have means sufficient. Has it not recently been clearly proved, and to the satisfaction of our wealthiest merchants, that a mere plodding book-keeping machine is amply able, on the enormous income he receives, to keep a wife, feed, clothe and educate his numerous progeny, and teach them all the value of that first of virtues, content. Yes, you had better marry. Hark ! in your ear. These men are ruined—I know it—and she won't have a cent.

Romeo. You freeze and fire me at the same instant ; but you can neither congeal my warm affection, nor burn down the edifice that love has raised within my heart.

Jones. But the dimes, boy, the dimes ; she knows their value if thou dost not.

Romeo. What mean you ?

Jones. Mean, my Stubbs ?

Romeo. Aye, mean ; is she not honest ?

Jones. Honest, my Stubbs ?

Romeo. By heaven, thou echo'st me ! I'll know thy thought !

Jones. Oh, no, you won't

Romeo. I will !

Jones. Not and the court do know itself right well ; and she is under the impression that she do.

Romeo. Then friendship's but a name, and all is lost ! She, you, and all the bright and beautiful world of life and hope of which I had dreamed ! Yon placid river woos me to its quiet bed. 'Twill be but one more mysterious disappearance. Adieu, unsympathizing friend, adieu !

Jones. Stay, stay, rash youth ! Has death no terrors ? Think of the coroner !

Romeo. Ha !

Jones. Your likeness in the papers ! taken at second hand—perhaps from some dead malefactor ! Don't talk of drowning, but drown your grief in some strong whiskey punch. Listen ; you've conquered—have an eye on Jessica—watch her when old Samith's about.

Romeo. Samith !

Jones. Samith ! she thinks he has the pewter, see if he don't lavish on her cheap Gift book-store bracelets, and play house orders when the free list's not suspended. Keep all your senses about you, I have said enough. Now am I your friend ?

Romeo. You are—you are ! for you have made me most unhappy ! I'll watch the gray-headed old sinner closely, and as for her, if I do find she's playing the coquette, I'll go upon the tallest kind of spree !

[Crosses R.]

Jones. Ha ! now I see there's spirit in you—put money in your pocket and I'll see you through.

Romeo. I will.

Jones. Do ! [Exit ROMEO, c.] Now who is it that says I am a humbug ? I've told a pack of lies here, to be sure, but if he don't see through them I am not to blame. Now let me cogitate : I must be partner in this house, and also wed this girl, not that I love her, I'm

not such a fool; but with her fortune I can have a high old time. He's in my way on both sides and must be removed; but how? I have it, in some forgetful moment I'll induce him to walk out after dark, if then some accidental slung shot don't accelerate his exit, the doctrine of Chances will be grievously at fault.

'Tis here, but yet a little mite confused,
Just as his head will be when it is contused.

[*Exit, L.*]

Music. Enter SAMITH, C.

Samith. I marvel much how goes the time; methinks 'tis late, or else this monitor is fast. What a most wondrous thing is appetite! When appertaining to a regular habit, with what mechanical correctness it doth point the hour of meals. What, ho! who waits there? Ho! Bernardo, is breakfast ready?

BILL BERNARDO enters, L.

Bill. Sir, it is.

Rich. [*Up.*] I could have sworn it. 'Tis well, Bernardo. I'll wait a space; give me the morning paper.

TOM, enters, R.

Tom. Behold it here.

[*Gives it and retires up.*]

Rich. Much thanks for such immediate service. Oh! thou diurnal destiny, thou all the world's condensed epitome, upon whose virgin sheet, so white, so pure, although from filthy shreds and meanest rags obtained, the footmarks of the passing time are ineffaceably imprinted; birthplace of mighty thoughts that make their utterers immortal; life, breath, and quickening impulse of the universal now, midway between the buried past and the unborn to come. At once the camp-ground and the battle-field of human energy from whence arises the commingled cry of victor and of vanquished, the jubilant chorus of triumphant aspirations blent with the sorrowing wail of hopes and hearts o'ermastered and undone. Oh thou most variable all-potent word-wizard, to how many thousand thousand wilt thou this day bring, or life or death, or liberty or bondage, joy or sorrow; hope's blessed sunray or the blackness of despair; a tremor of excitement thrills me at this moment, even as at the faro bank, one eyes the turning card with feverish anticipation; while I gaze—ha! my brain grows dizzy and my eye-sight fails! Erie! perdition seize the stock, is down again! and I, alas, a Bull!

[*Chord.*]

Tom. The breakfast, sir.

Rich. Ill-mannered menial, talk not to me of breakfast. Can it not penetrate through thy thick skull that I have lost a million breakfasts! Aye, a million gaping idiots even in the transitory instant that sufficed thee to pronounce that simple sentence.

Bill. Pardon your humble servitor if he suggest that haply your good friend and partner, who now approaches, may cheer thee with his sympathy.

Rich. Peace, thou audacious varlet! these words but sting me closer. No comfort can I get from him, or even sympathy, for he is a Bear.

[*Chord.*]

Music. Enter BAROWN, tragically—he paces to and fro.

Tom. The shadow of a mighty grief is on him also.

Bill. Sorrow is sacred, let us retire, they'll doubtless help themselves. *[They retire, c.]*

Rich. What moves him so? That letter it would seem. Shylock, what is the news?

Shy. Appalling! hideous! frightful! horrible and bad.

Rich. Where from?

Shy. The West.

Rich. Another failure!

Shy. You have said it. The miserable, mean picayune, unworthy wretch, who bought from you last fall, is bankrupt! and his excuse, forsooth, the lame one of the panic. That obsolete palladium of rascality. Why do they prate of crops and an abundant harvest, when, by my halidome, the only crop I find is an unseemly one of bills protested?

Rich. Pray restrain thy choler for a while; in business such as ours contingencies like this are not uncommon.

Shy. I grant you, sir, but are they less annoying? A failure or two I would not have minded, by debts of confidence at all secured, but thus to come in swarms is not agreeable. I'd hold him most unmanly and milk-livered who would fierce outcry raise from a mere mosquito bite, but say a million plunged their dagger snouts in him at once, say would he not outbellow all the bulls of Bashaw?

Rich. Nay, I entreat you to be calm. Wilt take an egg?

Shy. I think I will, that is, if rightly cooked.

Rich. That thou must risk. A subtle thing it is to fitly time the boiling of a simple egg. Tea or coffee?

Shy. Thou knowest right well I never taste the former. I cannot eat. I have no appetite.

Rich. Sooth to say, nor I.

[They rise.]

Shy. The villain! nearly thirteen thousand dollars, not to mention the lost dry goods.

Rich. That's nothing; I have lost in Erie.

Shy. Ha! did you Bull that stock?

Rich. Alas! I did.

Shy. And for the firm?

Rich. No!

Shy. That word has saved thy life.

Rich. Then am I glad I spoke it.

Shy. You should be, yet have I other wrongs.

Rich. Make it appear.

Shy. That you have wronged me doth appear, in this, you did give credit to this western man, though in my letters I had told you that I knew him well.

Rich. And might you not be wrong yourself? In ticklish times we musn't be too nice; but faith you always had an itching palm.

Shy. I an itching palm! You know it is Samith that talks it thus, else by the gods that speech had been your last!

Rich. Get out, you are not Barown!

Shy. Yes, I am.

Rich. No you are not.

Shy. Take care or I'll forget myself. I am a merchant older in practice and abler to guide the business.

Rich. Away, slight man!

Shy. Oh, Jupiter, must I endure all this.

Rich. All this and more. I'm glad you told me that you were an abler merchant. I'll learn of you to buy and sell dry goods.

Shy. Samith, you wrong me every way. I said an older merchant not a better; did I say better?

Rich. You said better, but what do I care what you said; you're nothing but a blower after all!

Shy. A what?

Rich. A blower.

Shy. Such insolence can only be washed out in blood!

Rich. With all my heart.

[*They rush at each other.*]

JESSICA rushes on, and interferes.

Jes. Father and friends, what madness rules the hour? Stop this unnatural broil, or let your knives release the bubbling blood that's boiling here.

[*Crosses R.*]

Shy. Let us dissemble before her, just for appearance sake, enormous villain.

Rich. Agreed ponderous caitiff. I had forgot myself. Revenge, remember, rankles yet within my heart.

Shy. It is nothing, dearest—one sanguinary word. Pestiferous wretch—Hoboken!

Rich. Enough. The dry Jersey soil shall drink up thy heart's blood!

Jes. [*Crosses center.*] It glads me to the soul to see that you are friends once more, for I would fain crave of you a boon.

Shy. My child, what is it?

Jes. For Musard's ball some tickets have been sent; the world of fashion will be there, my sire, and I, of course, amongst them; but, alas! unhappy me, there's a deep dread upon my soul. For six long weeks have I been longing for a love of a new dress, then ordered; and day by day still promised to be sent, and yet it comes not. If cruel fate should steel the milliner's heart, and, mocking at my hopes and griefs, she keeps that dress beyond this afternoon, life has no longer any joys for me. Say, will my loving sire a trusty messenger at once despatch; and if it be not done, oh! for my sake, let her be executed on the spot.

Shy. Away, unthinking girl! Think of the many lives that are already sacrificed, plying with endless toil that little instrument of torture, which, in our philanthropic day, numbers more victims than the block and cord of the most intolerant times.

Jes. And who should right that terrible wrong, my father? *Your* noble sex, who sell and wear the product of such murderous toil, or ours, whose lives are sacrificed to the vile profit seekers?

Shy. Thou knowest not what thou speakest, malapert and disobedient girl. Beware, lest I should hurl a malediction on your head.

As for you, caitiff, tremble! for the hour of your dissolution is at hand. [Exit L.]

Jes. Oh, fate! Oh, wretched, ruthless, miserable fate!

Rich. Sweet Jessica, yield not to such despair. I'll send a messenger.

Jes. Here's a ray of hope.

Rich. But on one condition.

Jes. What condition?

Rich. Can'st thou not surmise?

Jes. No.

Rich. My eyes, then, were sad bunglers, and did misinterpret the language of my heart. I love thee, Jessica. Let my bent knee evidence the homage of my soul.

Enter at top ROMEO and IAGO, C.

Iago. Now is your time.

Romeo. [R. C.] Rise, superannuated dotard, rise.

Rich. What means this violence?

Iago. [L.] Send for the Police. I'll swear he struck you. Run! 'tis your only chance; I'll cover your retreat. [Exit ROMEO.] Sweet lady, pray retire. I'll calm this raging tempest.

Rich. This outrage shall be fearfully atoned for. What, ho! there. Follow, follow! [Exit.]

Jes. Nothing to wear—nothing to wear! Exit L.

Iago. Now, whether he catch Stubbs, or Stubbs escape, I'm safe on either hand. I've set the old men by the ears already; and now, by covertly taking the part of one against the other, I can make friends with both, and so slide into the co-partnership. The girl is anxious to attend this ball; but, as it's not my evening out, it must not be. The milliner I have told, that Jessica is indisposed, and so she need not hurry. The dress not come, she most assuredly will remain at home. Soon as the store is closed, and shutters up, this way I'll wend my footsteps; and then, no rival near, will plead my cause with earnestness. She must listen to me; or if not, I'll wait another chance. Your strongest citadel must yield in time to a resistless siege.

[Exit. R. I.]

Enter JESSICA and HELEN M'GREGOR.

Helen. Take courage, dear mistress. What though the dress shouldn't come home? you have others.

Jes. Girl, you torture me! Not one—not one.

Helen. The blue striped silk.

Jes. Old fashioned, it was made last month.

Jes. The beautiful moire antique.

Jes. Fit for my grandmother.

Helen. There's your blue watered silk.

Jes. That's too scanty.

Hel. I'm sure it sweeps the ground.

Jes. Of course it does, or how could dry goods' people build palaces?

Hel. Let me see—the rose.

Jes. 'Tis faded—the sweetest silks, alas will fade.

“Last rose of summer.”

Hel. You've plenty, miss, up stairs, in wardrobes and in drawers.

Jes. Talk not to me of wardrobes or of drawers. Have I not worn them all? And are they not to me as valueless and vain as dinners eaten, or as sweethearts once beloved. No, no—unhappy me, that nothing HAVE TO WEAR. I'm dying, Helen. Sit beside me, and when I am gone, close my wretched eyes. [*Sings.*] Ha! look! There's papa driving down the avenue, in a new carriage, drawn by a beautiful team of grasshoppers. I'm sleepy; wake me when it's time to go to the opera. [*Sings, “Wake Me Early in the Morning.”*] Pah! I'm very cold. See, isn't that Bagnoli—no, only a canvas back duck. I'm fond of ducks. Hark! listen heard you not a sound? It is—it is the footstep of a friend—the milliner's messenger; the dress is finished; I'm saved! I'm in Luck—now!

An irruption of people, with bandboxes, headed by ROMEO.

Romeo. I did it. I overheard the nefarious scheme to keep you from going to the ball. Here's your dress; villainy is foiled, and all your fears are over.

Jes. You have nobly won me; I am thine for ever.

Enter SHYLOCK.

Shy. No, he's not. I have something to say about that.

Enter RICHELIEU.

Rich. And I.

Enter IAGO.

Iago. Aye, and I.

Shy. We have an affair to settle first.

Rich. Why not conclude it here?

Shy. At once then let it be.

[*They fight with umbrellas.*]

Iago. The worm that you trod upon now turns.

Romeo. I never trod upon you.

Iago. Liar and slave! the story is too long a one to go into now. But you have annoyed me, and your life or mine hangs on the issue now.

[*Fight with pistols and bowie knives.*]

Jes. Police!—Police! Is there no help? [*Runs to window. They all fight a desperate combat. A squad of Police range at the back, and look quietly on. JESSICA hastily swallows a mouthful of tea, which kills her instantly. Her example is followed by the devoted attendant, who collapses also. At the sound of the gong, they all give up the ghost, leaving the vigilant guardians of the peace, masters of the field.*]

THE END.

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